

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 JAKARTA 9451

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, ID
SUBJECT: SUHARTO'S NEW ADMINISTRATION - ANOTHER LOOK

1. SUMMARY: THE THREE-MONTH RECORD OF THE SUHARTO GOVERNMENT IS MIXED BUT PROMISING. THE PRESIDENT HAS SHOWN NEW CONFIDENCE AND VIGOR IN MOVING HIS SUBORDINATES TO ACTION IN PURSUIT OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT GOALS. EARLY AND MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION WILL BE NECESSARY IN SUCH PROBLEM AREAS FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT, BUT THE BASIC APPROACH IS POSITIVE AND DETERMINED. NEW MINISTERS ARE WORKING HARD TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF THEIR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE

THIRD DEVELOPMENT CABINET APPEARS AT THIS POINT TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT OVER ITS PREDECESSOR. IT IS MORE CLOSELY COORDINATED THAN THE LAST CABINET AND SHOULD WORK SMOOTHLY WITH THE PRESIDENT, WHO SHOWS NO INDICATION OF WANTING TO BOW OUT
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BEFORE COMPLETING HIS FULL FIVE-YEAR TERM. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS OF HIS THIRD TERM, PRESIDENT SUHARTO HAS SHOWN A NEW CONFIDENCE AND DETERMINATION IN DIRECTING HIS ADMINISTRATION. HE HAS MOVED FIRMLY AND DECISIVELY TO SPUR THE GOVERNMENT TO ACTION IN WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE ITS THREE PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY

AREAS: UNDEREMPLOYMENT, THE FOOD DEFICIT, AND INCOME DISPARITIES. SUHARTO IS CRACKING THE WHIP, ISSUING ORDERS TO HIS MINISTERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS TO SPEED UP THEIR TIME-TABLES FOR COMPLETING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR REACHING ESTABLISHED GOALS.

3. AT THIS POINT, THE RECORD OF HIS NEW ADMINISTRATION CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS MIXED BUT PROMISING. WHERE PROGRESS IS NOT READILY APPARENT IT HAS USUALLY BEEN DUE TO INEXPERIENCE, INITIAL CAUTION, STAFFING PROBLEMS, AND THE NEED TO COORDINATE DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS WITH LONG-RANGE NATIONAL PROGRAMS. MANY OF THE NEW MINISTERS ARE DECIDED IMPROVEMENTS OVER THEIR PREDECESSORS; A FEW ARE STILL STRUGGLING TO LEARN THE ROPES. ALMOST ALL CABINET MEMBERS HAVE BEEN MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES SINCE THEIR APPOINTMENT TO PRESENT THEIR VIEWS AND EXPLAIN THEIR PROGRAMS. THE PLANNED RE-SHUFFLING OF THE POWERFUL DIRECTORS GENERAL HAS YET TO OCCUR IN MOST DEPARTMENTS, AND THIS MAY HAVE INHIBITED THE RISE OF NEW IDEAS AND PROJECTS. ECONOMIC POLICY CHANGES WILL HAVE TO BE COORDINATED WITH REPELITA III (THIRD FIVE-YEAR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN) AND THUS WILL GENERALLY NOT EMERGE UNTIL 1979. MEANWHILE, THE OPSTIB ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN CONTINUES QUIETLY AT THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL WITH A FEW HUNDRED SUSPECTS ARRESTED EACH MONTH, MOSTLY IN LOW AND MIDDLE LEVEL POSITIONS.

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4. THERE IS A WIDE VARIANCE IN THE INFLUENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COORDINATING MINISTERS OF STATE. COORDINATING MINISTER FOR ECONOMY, FINANCE AND INDUSTRY WIDJOJO CONTINUES HIS ACTIVE ROLE AS INDONESIA'S ECONOMIC CZAR BUT HAS YET TO INTRODUCE ANY NEW ECONOMIC POLICIES. COORDINATING MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS PANGGABEAN IS STILL ATTEMPTING TO ORGANIZE HIS STAFF AND DEFINE HIS COORDINATING FUNCTIONS. GENERAL SURONO, COORDINATING MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WELFARE, IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN HIS AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND EAGER TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE, BUT HE APPARENTLY HAS YET TO FIND SOMETHING SPECIFIC TO DO.

5. THE MINISTERS OF STATE ARE PERFORMING GENERALLY WELL. STATE SECRETARY SUDHARMONO CONTINUES TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY AS THE PRESIDENT'S RIGHT-HAND MAN. MINISTER OF STATE FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY HABIBIE IS PROVING MUCH MORE DYNAMIC THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, PROFESSOR SUMITRO, AND HAS BEEN ACTIVELY REORGANIZING HIS OFFICE TO EXPAND ITS ACTIVITIES INTO THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FIELDS. HE HAS BROUGHT IN A NUMBER OF TECHNICIANS FROM THE PERTAMINA RE-

SEARCH STAFF AND IS BUSILY COORDINATING THE WORK OF THE VARIOUS RESEARCH AGENCIES. THE NEW MINISTER OF STATE FOR SUPERVISION OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT, EMIL SALIM, WHILE ENTHUSIASTIC, HAS ONLY A TINY STAFF AND HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH IN HIS CURRENT POSITION. HE DID ORGANIZE A SEMINAR IN JUNE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, HOWEVER, AND HAS BEEN SEEKING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FROM A STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN INDONESIA. MINISTER OF STATE FOR CONTROL OF THE STATE APPARATUS SOEMARLIN HAS CONTINUED IN HIS PREVIOUS POSITION WITHOUT FANFARE.

6. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MOCHTAR KUSUMAATMADJA HAS BEEN BUSY ATTENDING INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES
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DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS. HE HAS SO FAR KEPT TO STAND-ARD INDONESIAN POLICY POSITIONS AND HAS NOT, AS THERE WAS EARLIER REASON TO FEAR, TAKEN ANY EXTREME THIRD WORLD LINES IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS. HIS OUTSIZED EGO HAS BEEN KEPT UNDER CONTROL, AND HE HAS CLEARLY DEFERRED TO ECONOMIC DEPARTMENTS ON ISSUES OF PRIME INTEREST TO THEM. HE SEEMS TO BE RUNNING HIS OWN DEAPARTMENT WELL.

7. INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER AMIRMACHMUD HAS CONTINUED HIS FIRM POLICIES AGAINST POLITICAL EXTREMISTS AND DISSIDENTS, SUPPORTED BY KOPKAMTIB CHIEF ADMIRAL SUDOMO. HE HAS NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE ACCELERATED RELEASE OF

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POLITICAL DETAINEES, WHICH CLEARLY HAS THE PRESIDENT'S
ENDORSEMENT.

8. MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND SECURITY JUSUF HAS BEEN ACTIVELY SEEKING TO INSTILL NEW ATTITUDES IN THE MILITARY, VISITING REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDS THROUGHOUT INDONESIA. HE IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS AND WELFARE OF THE TROOPS, AND IS EFFECTIVELY GETTING THIS MESSAGE ACROSS TO LOWER COMMAND LEVELS. JUSUF HAS ALREADY ABOLISHED ASSIGNMENTS OF SOLDIERS AS PERSONAL SERVANTS AND HOUSE GUARDS FOR SENIOR OFFICERS. HE HAS TAKEN A MORE ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE MILITARY ACADEMY AND THE TRAINING OF FUTURE OFFICERS THAN DID HIS PREDECESSOR GENERAL PANGGABEAN, AND HAS ALSO BEEN PUSHING FOR MORE EFFECTIVE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE FRETELIN REMNANTS IN EAST TIMOR. ON INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING MUSLIMS, JUSUF SEEMS TO HAVE PLAYED
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A HEALTHY MODERATING ROLE. JUSUF IS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY TOWARD THE U.S. AND, AGAIN IN CONTRAST WITH PANGGABEAN, FAVORS CONTINUED RELIANCE ON THE U.S. FOR BASIC MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

9. AS MINISTER OF INFORMATION, ALI MURTOPO HAS COMMUNICATED MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PRESS THAN DID HIS PREDECESSOR, MASHURI, BUT REMAINS, OF COURSE, A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT PRESS POLICY AND SELF-CENSORSHIP REMAINS IN EFFECT FOR THE PRESS, BUT A REVIEW OF THE BASIC PRESS LAW IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION AND MURTOPO HAS ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH NEW CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESS AND THE GOVERNMENT. MURTOPO'S HEART ATTACK WILL SLOW HIM DOWN FOR A WHILE, BUT HE HAS PREVIOUSLY DISPLAYED REMARKABLE SURVIVAL ABILITIES.

10. RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER ALAMSYAH HAS BEEN A RESOUNDING SUCCESS IN DEFUSING YIM# ANIMOSITY TO THE MPR RESOLUTION ON KEPERCAYAAN. HE HAS MAINTAINED AN EXTREMELY HIGH PROFILE, SEEKING OUT OCCASIONS TO MAKE HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED

COMMENTS ON THE SENSITIVE ISSUES WHICH HE HANDLES, ESPECIALLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MUSLIMS AND THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN DEVELOPMENT. ALAMSYAH QUICKLY PASSED THE KEPERCAYAAN ISSUE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, DECLARING THAT THE MISTYCAL BELIEFS ARE NOT A RELIGION, AND HAS DEFENDED THE RIGHT OF MUSLIMS TO ACTIVELY PROPAGATE THEIR FAITH. SEVERAL MUSLIM POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED PLEASANT SURPRISE AT ALAMSYAH'S PERFORMANCE, BUT SOME OTHER GOI OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY FEEL HE IS TOO LENIENT WITH THE MUSLIMS.

11. MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE DAOED JOESOEF MOVED QUICKLY AND FIRMLY TO ESTABLISH HIS AUTHORITY OVER THE UNIVER-
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SITIES AND LEVY BINDING RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE RECTORS. HE HAS MADE EFFORTS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS TO PERSUADE THEM TO ACCEPT GOVERNMENT RULES THAT STUDENT ACTIVITY MUST BE NON-POLITICAL. IT HAS BEEN SLOW GOING SO FAR, AND THE STUDENTS ARE RELUCTANT TO GIVE UP HOPE OF RE-ESTABLISHING THEIR NOW-BANNED UNIVERSITY-WIDE STUDENT COUNCILS, BUT THEY HAVE NOT REJECTED DAOED JOESOEF AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. HE HAS ALSO PROPOSED A NEW EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, TO TAKE EFFECT NEXT YEAR, PLACING ALL SCHOOLS UNDER HIS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE AND TERMINATING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNAL AFFIARS IN THIS FIELD. THE NEW SYSTEM WILL INCLUDE CHANGES IN CURRICULUM, UPGRADING FOR TEACHERS, AND A STANDARDIZED ACADEMIC YEAR. SOME OF OUR SOURCES ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THEY VIEW AS THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES. JOESOEF, LIKE HIS SPONSOR ALI MURTOPO, REMAINS A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE, IS MORE FEARED THAN RESPECTED IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES, AND MAY BECOME A PROMINENT SURROGATE TARGET FOR THE MANY INDONESIANS WHO WISH TO GET AT ALI MURTOO.

12. THE HOLD-OVERS IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR, FINANCE MINISTER ALI WARDHANA AND MINISTER OF TRADE AND COOPERATIVES RADIUS PRAWIRO SEEM TO BE DOING BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH LITTLE PUBLICITY. ALI WARDHANA HAS MADE ONE OF THE FEW SIGNIFICANT PERSONNEL SHAKE-UPS IN THE DEPARTMENTS, MOVING THE WELL ENTRENCHED DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR MONETARY AFFAIRS JULIANTO, WHO HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SOME UNSAVORY GOSSIP, TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SPLITTING HIS PREVIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN TWO NEW APPOINTEES. AS INDICATED BY HIS PROSPECTIVE ROLE IN THE ASEAN DIALOGUE, RADIUS REMAINS A SIGNIFICANT POLICY-MAKER.

13. THE NEW MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SOEHOED, IS DOING WHAT HE CAN TO IMPROVE THE POOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT CLIMATE, BUT ADMITS THAT THE NEW "ONE STOP" INVESTMENT CENTER FOR

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FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN IS NOT YET EFFECTIVE, DUE PARTLY TO
OPPOSITION FROM SOME CUSTOMS AND TAX OFFICIALS. SOEHOED,
ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR OF THE NEW MINISTERS, TAKES A SENSIBLE
APPROACH TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ADVOCATING APPROPRIATE
SMALL SCALE DEVELOPMENT, SPEAKING AGAINST HIGH PROTECTIVE
TARIFFS, AND SEEKING TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT IN LABOR INTENSIVE
INDUSTRIES.

14. MINISTER OF MINING AND ENERGY SOEBROTO APPEARS TO LIKE
HIS NEW JOB, BUT HE HAS MUCH TO LEARN AND HAS SERIOUSLY
DAMAGED THE CONFIDENCE OF OIL COMPANY EXECUTIVES BY HIS
INACCESSABILITY. HE HAS ALSO ANTAGONIZED MOST OF HIS ASSOCIATES
IN THE MINERAL AND ENERGY FIELDS BY HIS AUTOCRATIC
STYLE OF OPERATION. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, SOEBROTO HAS
BEGUN TO FORMULATE A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY MOVING AWAY
FROM OIL FOR DOMESTIC ENERGY USE, AND PLANS TO SET UP A
NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD. HE ESTIMATES THAT REORGANIZATION
OF THE ENERGY DIVISION OF HIS DEPARTMENT TO ABSORB PLN,
THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC COMPANY, WILL BE ONE OF HIS MAJOR
TASKS IN THE FUTURE.

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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15. RUSMIN NURJADIN, THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN FIRM CHARGE OF HIS DEPARTMENT. THE MOST VISIBLE ECONOMIC MINISTER, HE HAS TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY AROUND THE COUNTRY AND IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING DOMESTIC AIR REGULATIONS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

16. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SOEDARSONO APPEARS COMPETENT BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN HIGHLY VISIBLE. HE HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR MORE AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES AND HAS PUSHED PALM OIL PRODUCTION. HE HAS MADE NO MAJOR POLICY CHANGES, WHICH WOULD IN ANY EVENT BE DIFFICULT UNTIL OR UNLESS THE OLD DIRECTORS GENERAL ARE MOVED. IN ANY EVENT, THE CURRENT RICE CROP IS GOING VERY WELL AND NEW INITIATIVES CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT CROP YEAR.

17. MANPOWER AND TRANSMIGRATION MINISTER HARUM ZAIN IS
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STILL LEARNING HIS JOB, BUT APPROACHES IT WITH A COMPETENCE AND DEDICATION THAT BODES WELL FOR AN OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN THE FUTURE. HE IS ALREADY CONSIDERED A GREAT IMPROVEMENT ON HIS PREDECESSOR.

18. PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER PURNOMOSIDI GIVES THE IMAGE OF BEING ANOTHER ACTIVE AND CAPABLE LEADER, WITH SOLID EXPERIENCE IN HIS AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. HE HAS UNDERTAKEN NO NEW INITIATIVES YET, BUT HAS BEEN BUSY VISITING PROJECTS IN THE FIELD TO FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH THEIR OPERATIONS.

19. HEALTH MINISTER SOEWARDJONO IS STILL LEARNING THE ROPES AND HAS TAKEN NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS YET, BUT HAS AN EXCELLENT BACKGROUND AND WILL BE A MARKED IMPROVEMENT OVER HIS PREDECESSOR WHO HELD THE POST FOR 12 YEARS.

20. SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER SAPARDJO HAS BEEN QUIET, BUT HIS DEPARTMENT HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO GIVE INCREASINGLY DETAILED ATTENTION TO AGREEMENTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

21. JUSTICE MINISTER MUDJONO IS PRETTY MUCH OF A CIPHER; VERY RETIRING BY NATURE, HE SEEMS TO HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA OF HIS DUTIES.

22. THE SIX JUNIOR MINISTERS ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, QUIETLY LEARNING THEIR JOBS. COOPERATIVES MINISTER BUSTANIL ARIFIN HAS BEEN STUDYING COOPERATIVES IN TAIWAN AND KOREA HAS HAD BROUGHT OVER SOME TOP ECONOMINISTS FROM BULOG TO DESIGN AN EXPANDED PROGRAM OF COOPERTIVES INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE APPROACH IS POSITIVE, BUT THE PROGRAM MAY PROVE A BIT TOO GRANDIOSE. JUNIOR MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS ABDUL GAFUR IS FORMULATING A PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS AFFECT-
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ING SCHOOL DROP-OUTS AND CHILDREN IN THE RURAL AREAS.

23. THE STYLE OF THE NEW TEAM SEEMS BASICALLY UNCHANGED, WITH THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY GIVING INSTRUCTIONS AND RECEIVING REPORTS DIRECTLY FROM INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THE COORDINATING MINISTERS (ALTHOUGH WIDJOJO REMAINS, OF COURSE, SOLIDLY PREEMINENT IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR). THERE ARE, HOWEVER, INDICATIONS OF MORE DYNAMISM AND PURPOSE AND BETTER COORDINATION. IN GREAT PART, THIS IS BECAUSE SUHARTO HAS IN RECENT WEEKS PROJECTED NEW CONFIDENCE AND DETERMINATION, GIVING NO INDICATION THAT HE MIGHT DECIDE TO BOW OUT BEFORE COMPLETING HIS FULL TERM.

24. AFTER BALANCING THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, THE STARS AND THE PLODDERS IN THE NEW MINISTERIAL LINEUP, THE THIRD DEVELOPMENT CABINET LOOKS A BIT BETTER THAN IT DID THREE MONTHS AGO. THE REAL TESTS OF ITS STRENGTH WILL, OF COURSE, BE LEVIED OVER A LONGER TIME FRAME AS IT SEEKS ANSWERS TO BASIC PROBLEMS IN SUCH KEY AREAS AS FOOD PRODUCTION, INCOME DISPARITIES AND FOREIGN INVESTOR CONFIDENCE, AND AS IT MEETS AN EXPECTED RESURGENCE OF OPEN OPPOSITION FROM STUDENTS AND OTHERS DISAFFECTED. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WE AND MOST OF OUR CLOSER DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES BELIEVE THE NEW TEAM IS DISPLAYING PROMISING INITIAL MOMENTUM.
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